第94話

The 30 billion race of the underworld

ざわ…
ざわ…
NO WAY...
ON JUST ONE RACE ...
BETTING 30 BILLION
...
EVERYTHING IN THIS 30 BILLION ROOM ...
SPENDING IT
FU FU FU ...
IT'S ....
ペタッ
...THAT'S ...
THEN MONEY IS THE PAINT ...
IF OUR FLEETING LIVES ARE A CANVAS,
THIS DESIRE ...
THE WORLD IS COLORED BY
MONEY IS POWER ...
...
THEY CAN ALL COME TRUE.
EVEN PIPE-DREAMS,
ANY KIND OF MAGNIFI-CENT DREAM,
DEPEND-ING ON HOW YOU USE IT,

WHENEVER ANYTHING HAPPENS IN THIS WORLD,

MONEY IS THE SOURCE ...

I'LL SNATCH IT.

I'LL TAKE IT ALL.

AT A HIGH-STAKES RACE IN TOKYO,

WITH THIS 30 BILLION,

FU FU ...

HAAH ....

YEAH ....

TAKE IT ...?

?...

FU FU ...

AND YOU PLACE A BUNCH OF BETS ON HIM ...

FIXING THE RACE ...?

SOMEHOW ...

LIKE MAKING AN UN-POPULAR HORSE WIN ON PURPOSE ...

SO IN OTHER WORDS, YOU MEAN ...

EHH~ ....

HAAH ...

IF YOU PUT A 30 BILLION YEN BET ON THEM, YOU'LL GET MAYBE 100 YEN IN RETURNS.

NO MATTER HOW UN-POPULAR THE HORSE IS,

HAH ...?

IDIOT ...

THERE'S NO CHOICE BUT TO DO IT ONE ON ONE ...!

ONCE YOU PASS A CERTAIN THRESHOLD ...

YOU CAN'T TAKE ON THE ODDS ANY MORE.

HAH ...

YOU DECIDE WHAT RACE TO BET ON.

BETW-EEN TWO PEO-PLE

YEAH ...

ONE ON ONE...?

AND THE HORSES YOU DECIDE ON...

THEN YOU DESIGNATE THE HORSES.

HAH ...

WHICHEVER PLACES HIGHER WILL DECIDE IT.

FU FU ...

WHO WOULD EVER TAKE ON SUCH A BET?

FOR THAT 30 BILLION

BUT ...

I ALREADY HAVE SOMEONE IN MIND ...

IN MIND ...?

OF COUR-SE.

THAT WAS THE BIGGEST PROBLEM FROM THE START

HOW-EVER ...

BY THAT ...

YOU MEAN WHO ...?

FUFU ...

JAPAN'S CENTRAL AUTHORITY ON HORSE-RACING, THE JSA,

IS ACTUALLY UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE.

POLITICIANS WHO MAKE A LIVING IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,

IN NAGATACHOU, THEY'RE CALLED THE "AGRICULTURAL GROUP".

THE LEADER OF THIS GROUP

IS THE CURRENT DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEADER.

YOUICHI KONO.

?
...

HAH
...

...

HAH
...

HAH
...

HA HA HA
...

IS THAT GUY REALLY THAT RICH?

EH
...?

SOMEHOW
...
I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE IT...

NO... THAT'S
...

WHAT'S WRONG
...?

THEY MERELY HAVE TO PUMP IT OUT ...
AND THEN THERE'S "POWER".
...
...?
THEIR WELL OF MONEY WILL NEVER DRY UP ...
THE JSA IS IN-EXHAUST-IBLE.
JSA
IS A NUMBER THEY CAN EASILY PUT TOGETH-ER
30 BILLION
FU FU ...
WHEN YOUICHI KONO WANTS MONEY, THE JSA JUST PILES IT UP FOR HIM IN SOME BOXES?
SO IN OTHER WORDS ...
HAH ...?
...
YOU ...
WHY WOULD THE JSA ...
WHY ...?
... ...
HAH ...
BUT THE RESULT IS ESS-ENTIALLY THAT ...
BEFORE THAT, HE HAS TO TAKE SOME STEPS.

THESE ARE THE FUNDA-MENTALS

OF POLI-TICIANS AND BUREAU-CRATS IN JAPAN

THE BASIC RELAT-IONSHIPS.

I'LL EXPLAIN.

NO HELPING IT.

YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ...

HAH ...

SO LET'S USE THE MINISTRY OF AGRI-CULTURE AS AN EXAMPLE.

OK?

...

...

EH ...?

WHO'S AFTER THE MINISTER?

IS THE MINISTER OF AGRI-CULTURE.

NEEDLESS TO SAY... THE ONE AT THE TOP...

...

I HAVE ABSO-LUTELY NO IDEA.

IT'S NO USE.

WHICH POST IS NEXT?

WELL THEN ...

THE VICE-MINISTER IS A BUREAU-CRAT.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IS A POLITICIAN.

... SO THERE ARE TWO POSTS.

ARE THE VICE-MINISTER AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER

農産大臣

政務次官

事務次官

UNDER THE MINI-STER ...

...

CAN ACHIEVE. IT'S THE SAME FOR EVERY MINIS-TRY.

IT'S THE HIGHEST POST A BUREAU-CRAT ...

...OF THE ELITE SINCE HIS YOUTH.

YOU MIGHT CALL THEM AN UPSTART.

A MAN WHO WAS ON THE PATH...

IT'S ONLY NATURAL ...

THEY BECOME THE BRAINS THAT VIRTUALLY RUN THEIR MINISTRY.

THE VICE-MINI-STER.

THAT BUREAUCRAT IS NUMBER ONE.

THUS THE VICE-MINISTER HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO LEAD THEIR WORK.

THEY'RE NO BETTER THAN A BABY, TOTAL AMATEURS.

FOR THE MINISTER AND DEPUTY MINI-STER WHO WERE APPOINTED SO SUDD-ENLY, THERE'S NO WAY FOR THEM TO KNOW HOW THE MINISTRY WORKS.

WHEN THERE ARE CABI-NET CHAN-GES,

THANKS TO THIS EXCELLENT BUREAUC-RACY...

IT'S VERY POSSIBLE THIS COUNTRY IS ONLY FUNCTIONING RIGHT NOW..

THE BUDGET RISES.

IN THIS POLITICAL SYSTEM, THEY'RE FAILING TO ESTABLISH, AMONGST THIS CONFU-SION,

JUST AS IN THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS,

WELL, THOUGH THEY MAY DESERVE SOME REWARD FOR THEIR LABOUR,

THERE IS A POLITICAL REVOLVING DOOR SYSTEM IN JAPAN.

BUT ...

WHETHER GOOD, OR BAD, ARE PULLING THIS COUNTRY

BACK FROM THE BRINK.

BUREAU-CRATS,

IT'S NOT SOMETHING EVERYONE WOULD BE ABLE TO DO.

事務次官

IT'S PROBABLY ABOUT ONE IN FIVE PEOPLE WHO MANAGE IT.

OR THE RICE PRICE DELIBERATIVE COUNCIL.

OR THE CEN-TRAL HORSE-RACING AUTHORITY, THE JSA

RETIRING TO A GOLDEN POSITION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRI-CULTURE.

HAVE YOU HEARD OF IT?

IT'S CALLED "AMAKU-DARI".

Y... YES...

ONCE THEIR LIFE AS AN OFFICIAL IS OVER,

THERE ARE OTHER ADVANTAGES, TOO. THEY'LL BUILD YOU A MANSION TO LIVE IN DURING YOUR TERM.

...

YOU CAN GAIN A RETIREMENT PACKAGE OF 100 - 200 MILLION YEN.

IT'S PERFECT.

HOWEVER IF YOU SUCCESSFULLY OBTAIN THE POSITION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE JSA,

JSA

IN A TERM OF 3 - 6 YEARS,

99 OUT OF A HUNDRED WOULD. BUT... THAT BECOMES A PROBLEM.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE JSA.

WHO SHOULD BECOME THE PRESIDENT?

SO...

ALMOST EVERYONE WOULD WANT TO BECOME...

THEY'LL HAVE MORE THAN ENOUGH MONEY TO LAST THEM AFTERWARDS.

HAH ...

...

KONO HAS IT.

THE POWER REALLY LIES WITH THE LEADER OF THE AGRICULTURE GROUP.

OF AGRICULTRURE. BECAUSE THAT APPOINTMENT CHANGES SO OFTEN

THE RIGHT TO APPOINT IT... IS HELD BY THE MINISTER

THE VICE-PRES-IDENT, TOO...
OF COURSE, THAT RIGHT ISN'T JUST LIMITED TO THE PRESIDENT.
IT EXTENDS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECT-ORS...
YOU CAN SEE THE BUREAU-CRACY IS REALLY UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE POLITICIANS.
THEY CAN SKIP OVER A BUNCH OF PEOPLE FROM THE BEGIN-NING.
JUST KNOWING THAT,
HAVING THAT RIGHT IS A BIG DEAL.

BASICALLY, THE WILL OF THE AGRICULTURAL GROUP'S BOSS, KONO, CANNOT BE IGNORED.
THE JSA REQUIRES APPROVAL FROM THE MINISTER OF AGRI-CULTURE.
UNTIL THEIR BUDGET HAS BEEN ALLOC-ATED,
AND, WHEN THEY'RE HOLDING A MEETING,

AND THEY HAD SOME OF THE CON-TRACTORS BID ON IT....
FOR EXAMPLE, IF THEY WANTED TO REPAIR SOME OF THE STANDS,
SO THEN WHAT HAPPENS ...?
WITHOUT IT, THE JSA CAN'T MOVE AN INCH.
THEY MUST HAVE HIS APPROVAL.

IT'LL PASS.

IF KONO SAYS

BUT...

USE COMPANY "A"...

ORIG-INALLY, THE ESTIMATE WOULD NEVER BE APP-ROVED.

THE ONE WHO GAVE THE HIGHEST ESTIMATE, SAY COMPANY "A",

EH?

THEY PILE IT UP IN BOXES OR SOME-THING?

ISN'T THAT A BRIBE?

HAH ...

NATURALLY, KONO WILL GET MONEY FROM THAT COMPANY TOO.

FOR CONSTRUC-TION WORK THAT WILL COST 2 BILLION, THEY PUT 2.5 BILLION IN THE BUDGET.

IT COMES WITH A REBATE BUILT IN.

WHEN THEY PUT THE ESTIMATE IN THE BUDGET,

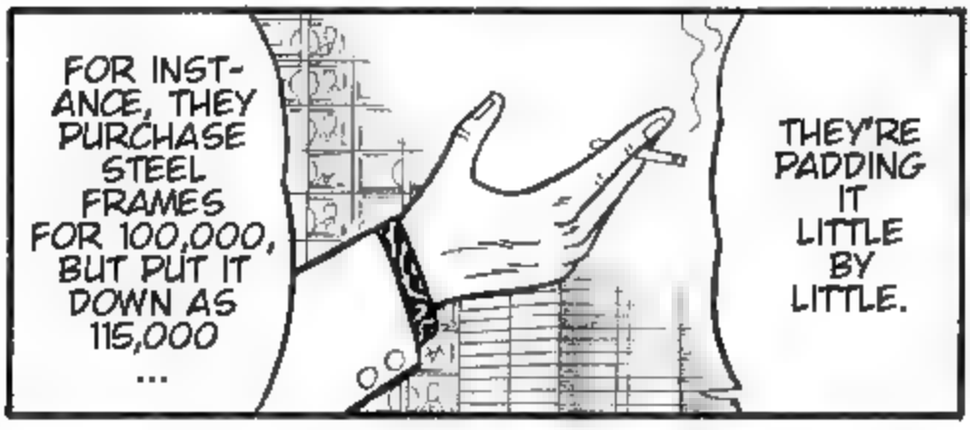
NO, NOT LIKE THAT.

SAY THAT, FROM THE START,

KU KU KU

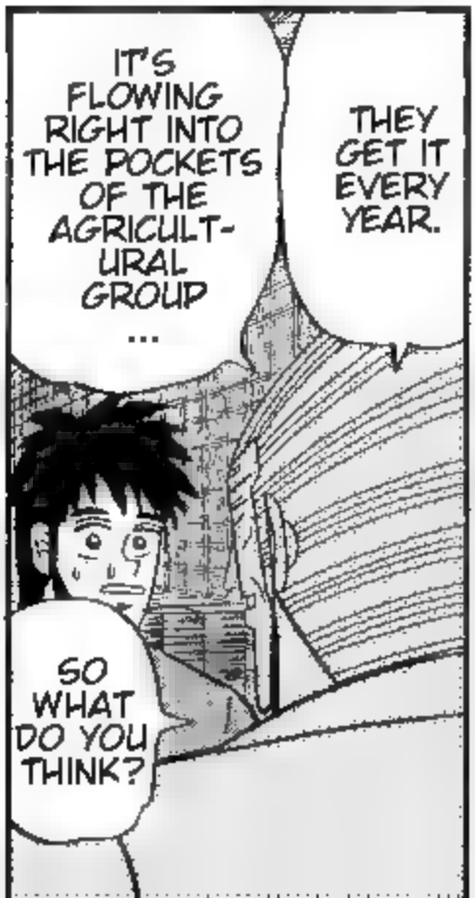
YOU'D NEVER DISCOVER THEIR TRICK.
IF YOU JUST GLANCED OVER THE BOOKS,

IT COMES TO A REBATE OF 500 MILLION ...


FOR INSTANCE, THEY PURCHASE STEEL FRAMES FOR 100,000, BUT PUT IT DOWN AS 115,000 ...
THEY'RE PADDING IT LITTLE BY LITTLE.

THE JSA'S HANDS ARE TIED.
THAT 3% GOES STRAIGHT TO THE AGRICULTURAL GROUP.

EVEN GENERAL CONTRACTORS MUST GIVE AN ESTIMATE WITH 3% EXTRA.
IN RETURN FOR HAVING THEIR PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT APPROVED, THEY INCLUDE A KICKBACK FOR THE POLITICIANS...


IT'S FLOWING RIGHT INTO THE POCKETS OF THE AGRICULTURAL GROUP ...
THEY GET IT EVERY YEAR.
SO WHAT DO YOU THINK?

IF WE SAY IT'S 500 BILLION IN ADMINISTRATIVE FUNDS, AND TAKE 10% OF THAT...
WHAT THE JSA USES IN A YEAR ...
IT'S ABOUT 50 BILLION ...

6% ...
THAT'S PROBABLY A LOW GUESS EVEN.
NO, MORE LIKE 10%.

HAH ...
IT'S NO MYSTERY.
KONO DEFINITELY HAS ABOUT 30 BILLION TO PLAY WITH.
THAT... WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT...
BUT ...
THAT'S TRUE ...
IF YOU TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT THE WORLD,
IN THE END, THAT'S THE BEST SCHEME.
THEY'RE SUCKING IT UP FROM THE COMMON PEOPLE BIT BY BIT.
THAT'S RIGHT...
HA HA HA ...
THEY'RE JUST TAKING THE MONEY FROM US, AREN'T THEY?
HAH ...
RIGHT ?
IT'S FULL OF THESE KINDS OF TRICKS.

I UNDERSTAND HOW KONO WOULD BE ABLE TO RAISE THIS MUCH MONEY...

HM?

SO THIS MONEY ...?

HAH ...

...

THIS HUH ...

HOW DID YOU GET THIS 30 BILLION ...?

WHAT'S HERE RIGHT NOW.

BUT HOW DID YOU DO IT, POPS ...?

IT SEEMS THIS CREDIT UNION WAS IN POVERTY AFTER DISPOSING OF THEIR BAD LOANS.

ORIGINALLY THIS MONEY WAS FROM A CREDIT UNION CONNECTED TO TEIJITSU BANK ...

I BORROWED FROM A BANK THAT I'M CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH, TEIJITSU.

THIS ...

THIS MONEY WAS PREPARED IN ORDER TO SAVE THEM.

BUT LISTEN TO MY STORY.

IT SEEMS LIKE THEY ....

YEAH ...

SAVE ...?

CAN'T BE SAVED WITH THIS 30 BILLION.

...

IT SHOULD BE FINE TO THROW AWAY THE REST, RIGHT?

JUST GIVE IT THE REMAINING MONEY AND LET IT GO BANKRUPT.

YOU SHOULD STOP ...

PRESI-DENT ...

PRESI-DENT ...

...

...

BUT... I CAN'T DO THAT EITHER.

OF COURSE ...

WHAT IF YOU HAD 60 BILLION ...?

THE-RE'S NO WAY I CAN.

IF I HAD THAT MUCH...

IF...

THEN SOME-HOW ....

IT WILL TAKE A LITTLE TIME...

BUT I WILL DOUBLE IT FOR SURE.

PLEASE ENTRUST THAT 30 BILLION TO ME.

SO ...

BUT... TEIJITSU IS ALREADY DONE FOR.

I UNDER-STAND THAT.

USING THAT MONEY ON A HIGH-STAKES GAMBLE ...

THAT'S RIDICU-LOUS ...!

THAT 30 BILLION ...

TH.. THAT MONEY'S ...

YE-AH.

...

WE'RE BETTING 30 BILLION.

WE'D BE FIGHTING HIM ON HIS OWN TURF.

THERE'S JUST NO WAY!

AGAINST KONO ...

A HORSE-RACING GAME AGAINST THE CENTRAL AUTHORITY ON HORSE-RACING, THE JSA...

FUFU ...

THAT'S A SERIOUSLY INSANE GAMBLE ...!

ALL THE BEST HORSES AND ALL THE BEST JOCKEYS, THEY'RE ALL UNDER HIS SUPERVISION!

WHAT KIND OF FUCKED-UP PLAN ...

THAT'S HOW I MAKE A LIVING.

IT'S A WEAK-NESS I WILL CREATE.

PLUS, THEY HAVE AN-OTHER WEAK SPOT.

THEY ALSO HAVE A WEAK POINT. THAT WEAK POINT WILL GIVE US AN ABSOLUTE ADVAN-TAGE.

IT'S NOT LIKE THAT.

NO.

? ...

...

POPS ...

JUST WATCH ...

WINNING ...

銀と金◆第94話◆完

TRANSLATION/EDITING: TEABUN
CLEANING/TYPESETTING: HAGENOBAKA